

Message Text

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ACTION L-02

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 IO-10 ISO-00 DPW-01 SCA-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 H-01 SS-15

NSC-05 EUR-12 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 PM-03

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O 191320Z FEB 75

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 811

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AORG, ICRC

SUBJECT: ICRC OPERATIONS IN ETHIOPIA

REF: (A) STATE 032550; (B) ADDIS ABABA 1763; (C) STATE 036793

1. ICRC DELEGATE GENERAL FOR AFRICA MOREILLON RETURNED GENEVA FROM ADDIS FEBRUARY 16. ON FEBRUARY 18 MOREILLON INFORMED MISSOFF AS FOLLOWS CONCERNING ICRC OPERATIONS IN ETHIOPIA.

2. ON FEBRUARY 9 JUST PRIOR TO MOREILLON'S VISIT TO ADDIS PRESIDENT ICRC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ROGER GALLOPIN SENT FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO CHAIRMAN PMAC, GENERAL TEFFERI BANTE: QUOTE. IN CONFORMITY WITH ITS SPECIFIC ROLE AS DEFINED IN THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS WISHES TO EXPRESS ITS DEEP CONCERN ABOUT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ERYTHREA PROVINCE.

CONVINCED THAT THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT WILL DO ITS
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UTMOST TO RESPECT ITS HUMANITARIAN UNDERTAKINGS, THE

ICRC OFFERS ITS SERVICES TO ASSIST THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 3 AND OF OTHER RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS. IN PARTICULAR THE ECRC IS READY TO ADD ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE EFFORTS OF THE ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES AND THE ETHIOPIAN RED CROSS IN THE FIELD OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE, THE CARE OF THE SICK AND WOUNDED AND THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS.

CONFIDENT THAT YOUR EXCELLENCY WOULD WELCOME AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH OUR DELEGATE GENERAL FOR AFRICA, I HAVE ASKED DR. MOREILLON TO PROCEED TODAY TO ADDIS ABABA SO AS TO HAVE AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH YOU AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE.

HIGHEST CONSIDERATION. END QUOTE.

3. AS REPORTED PARA 1 REFTEL B, MOREILLON WAS UNABLE DISCUSS ICRC OPERATIONS IN ERITREA WITH TEFFERI BANTE. "BANTE WAS TOO BUSY." MOREILLON HAD TELEPHONIC CONTACT WITH CAPTAIN SISSAYE AND THUS ARRANGED TO CONVEY MESSAGE TO TEFFERI BANTE

PRINCIPAL POINTS OF WHICH AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: AS IN EVERYTHING, THE ESSENTIALS HERE ARE THE SPIRIT IN WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE ICRC FACE A COMMON HUMANITARIAN CONCERN.

IT IS PRECISELY THIS SPIRIT WHICH OUR PRESIDENT WANTED TO CONVEY IN HIS CABLE TO YOU AND IN THE MESSAGE WHICH HE HAS ASKED ME TO BRING TO YOUR EXCELLENCY.

AS YOU WILL HAVE NOTICED, THE CABLE OF OUR PRESIDENT DOES NOT INSIST ON LEGAL ASPECTS OF SITUATION. WE ALL KNOW THAT ARTICLE 3 COMMON TO GENEVA CONVENTION EXPLICITLY INVITES THE ICRC TO OFFER ITS SERVICES IN THIS TYPE OF SITUATION. AND THIS WE HAVE DONE IN THE PAST AND ARE DOING AGAIN

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TODAY.

BUT THE LEGALITIES ARE NOT WHAT MATTER HERE. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT ICRC HAS OFFERED AND IS OFFERING TO ADD ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS OF YOUR GOVERNMENT AND OF THE ETHIOPIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY IN THE PRESENT SITUATION.

IN SAYING SO, WE CLEARLY AND FULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THESE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE MADE BY THE ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES, FOR WE ARE NOT INFLUENCED BY NEGATIVE REPORTS OF A CERTAIN PRESS, AS THE ICRC REALIZES BETTER THAN ANY OTHER INSTITUTION HOW VERY DIFFICULT IT CAN BE TO KEEP HUMANITARIAN PREOCCUPATIONS AT FOREFRONT AT VERY TIME OF CONFLICT. WE HAVE BEEN IN THIS BUSINESS FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS. THE ICRC HAS BEEN CREATED BY AND FOR CONFLICTIVE SITUATIONS AND WE KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT WHAT MATTERS IN SUCH SITUATIONS IS THAT THERE IS A HUMANITARIAN WILL AT THE TOP. AND WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THIS IS SITUATION HERE, THAT THIS HUMANITARIAN WILL IS HERE.

WE BELIEVE THAT ICRC CAN BE A VERY EFFECTIVE TOOL OF THIS HUMANITARIAN POLICY. NOT AS A PROPAGANDA MEANS, NOT SO AS TO ENABLE YOUR GOVERNMENT TO SAY "THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS IS ON THE SPOT, WHICH SHOWS WE HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE." NO, THIS IS NEITHER YOUR PURPOSE NOR OURS. ON THE CONTRARY, DISCRETION IS AND HAS BEEN ONE OF OUR MAIN INSTRUMENTS OF WORK FOR OVER A CENTURY AND WE HAVE RECENTLY PROVEN IT AGAIN IN ETHIOPIA ITSELF.

WHAT WE KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE IS THAT WE CAN -- IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH THE ERCS -- GIVE YOU, WHETHER THROUGH THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF OUR DOCTORS, OR THROUGH MATERIAL RELIEF, OR THROUGH THE SHEER PRESENCE OF A MAN LIKE MR. GAILLARD, THE MEANS OF YOUR HUMANITARIAN POLICY AND THE GUARANTEE THAT IT IS RESPECTED.

WE ARE NEVER THERE TO JUDGE BUT TO ASSIST; WE
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DO NOT DENOUNCE BUT WE INFORM THE AUTHORITY IN CHARGE; WE ARE NOT CONCERNED WITH POLITICS BUT WITH ITS VICTIMS; WE NEVER CAN IMPOSE BUT ALWAYS TRY TO CONVINCE. WE ARE, SIR, THE MEANS OF YOUR OWN HUMANITARIAN POLICY. END QUOTE.

4. ON FEBRUARY 17 AFTER MOREILLON'S RETURN TO GENEVA ICRC ISSUED FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE; QUOTE: THE OFFER OF SERVICES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS TO THE ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES WHEN TROUBLE BROKE OUT IN ASMARA AT THE END OF JANUARY, CONFIRMED BY A CABLE SENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ICRC EXECUTIVE BOARD ON 9 FEBRUARY TO THE HEAD OF THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT, IS STILL BEING CONSIDERED IN ADDIS ABABA.

IN ADDITION TO THIS OFFER FROM THE ICRC, THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT IS STUDYING A REPORT DRAWN UP BY THE ETHIOPIAN RED CROSS, WHICH WAS AUTHORIZED LAST WEEK TO GO TO THE CAPITAL OF THE PROVINCE OF ERITREA TO SURVEY THE SITUATION AND THE HUMANITARIAN NEEDS.

TWO ICRC DELEGATES, ONE OF THEM A DOCTOR, HAVE BEEN IN ADDIS ABABA FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. THEY WERE JOINED ON 10 FEBRUARY BY THE ICRC DELEGATE GENERAL FOR AFRICA, WHO RETURNED TO GENEVA ON 16 FEBRUARY AFTER VARIOUS CONTACTS WITH THE ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES AND RED CROSS. END QUOTE.

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INFO OCT-01 AF-06 IO-10 ISO-00 DPW-01 SCA-01 CIAE-00

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O 191320Z FEB 75

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 812

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

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5. MOREILLON REFERRED TO REUTER NEWS REPORT DATE-LINED WASHINGTON FEBRUARY 17 WHICH READ IN PART AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE: THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAID TONIGHT THAT IT WAS STUDYING A REQUEST FROM THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT FOR MILITARY SUPPLIES, INCLUDING AMMUNITION. END QUOTE.

6. VIEWING ANNOUNCEMENT THAT USG MAY RESUME ARMS DELIVERIES TO ETHIOPIA, MOREILLON QUERIED POSSIBILITY OF USG ATTACHING HUMANITARIAN STRING TO DEAL WHEREBY ICRC WOULD BE ENABLED PROVIDE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS ON BOTH SIDES AND HAVE ACCESS TO DETAINEES. THIS CONNECTION MOREILLON NOTED THAT ICRC HAS RECEIVED WRITTEN ASSURANCE FROM ELF CONCERNING ADHERENCE TO AND APPLICATION OF ARTICLE 3 OF GENEVA CONVENTION.

7. MOREILLON HASTENED EXPLAIN THAT IN OFFERING THIS SUGGESTION ICRC WAS NOT RPT NOT ENDORSING OR SUPPORTING USG'S ACTION TO SUPPLY ARMS TO ETHIOPIA BUT RATHER WAS SEEKING WAY FOR ICRC TO PLAY ITS

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TRADITIONAL HUMANITARIAN ROLE DURING TIME OF CKONFLICT IN ETHIOPIA.

8. MOREILLON EXPRESSED VIEW THAT ICRC PRESENCE IN CONFLICT AREA OF ETHIOPIA WOULD IN NO WAY ENDANGER THE SECURITY AND WOULD NOT INVOLVE ANY INTERFERENCE IN ETHIOPIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ON OTHER HAND, HE OPINED THAT APART FROM ITS HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS ICRC PRESENCE IN AREA OF CONFLICT WOULD SERVE USEFUL PURPOSE TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED WITH RESPECT WORLD OPINION.

9. FAILING SUCH HUMANITARIAN STRING TO POSSIBLE ARMS DEAL, MOREILLON SUGGESTED THAT ANY OTHER AMERICAN INTERVENTION WITH PMAC ON BEHALF ICRC MIGHT BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AT PRESENT TIME.

10. MISOFF ASSURED MOREILLON THAT MATTER WOULD BE PROMPTLY REPORTED TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSIDERATION. PLEASE ADVISE.

1. KHARTOUM 0400 AND STATE 036704 WHICH JUST RECEIVED WILL BE SUBJECT OF SEPARATE MESSAGE.
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